



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



STATE VETERANS HOME CELEBRATES 125TH ANNIVERSARY

On Thursday of this week, the city of Hot Springs and the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home held a joint celebration of South Dakota's 125th anniversary of statehood and the SVH's 125th anniversary of operation.

The festivities started at the base of Minnekahta Avenue, next to the river at the Kidney Springs Gazebo. The city had re-furbished the gazebo and placed a new statue on its roof.

During the program, the community band and the high school band performed and Mayor Cindy Donnell and local artist Mike Tuma recounted the creation of Kidney Springs and it's change over time.

After that program attendees traveled to the SVH auditorium to continue the celebration, with cake and ice cream. Superintendent Brad Richardson and Mayor Donnell gave brief remarks as a slide show of historic photos of the SVH and Kidney Springs ran continually.

The program closed with Peggy Sanders from the State Historical Society presenting certificates of appreciation to local businesses that have made a significant effort to preserve the appearance of their Hot Springs buildings.

Superintendent Richardson notes that, "as the 26th Superintendent of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice SD State Veterans Home, it was truly humbling to be a part of it's 125th year anniversary. It's my honor to continue to support and

work alongside these veterans who've given so much to support this country. I cannot think of a better place to continue to serve my fellow South Dakotan's."



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Heroes Among Us—
showcasing 125 South Dakota veterans.



HEROES AMONG US

Gov. Dennis Daugaard has signed an Executive Proclamation proclaiming Sunday, Sept. 28, 2014, as "Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day" in South Dakota. In his proclamation, the Governor encourages South Dakotans to become aware of the South Dakota's Gold Star Mothers and their efforts to continue to honor the sons and daughters who paid the ultimate sacrifice for all our freedoms.

So it is fitting that this week's "heroes among us," does not focus on one or two heroes, but 35 heroes who served during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom. Thirty-five young men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice. These brave men and women sacrificed their lives for our freedom and for American's to continue their journey in life. To those who have fought for our country, freedom has a value that the protected will never understand. They gave up everything for our country, for our freedom.

It would be impossible for me to capture and tell the story about each of these 35 heroes. With each one of them comes a family, a history, a once lived life to be treasured for all time.

A "Fallen Heroes Memory Book" has been created by the families of these fallen heroes. This book travels with the banner display and is available by clicking on the following link: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/fallen%20heroes%20memory%20book.aspx>. (Please note, that not all families have created their heroes history.)

"Families are the support for all of our service members," said SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman. "The Gold Star Families have given their all and fill a special place in all of our hearts. Their sacrifice is incomprehensible to us, and their dedication and allegiance is unfailing."



HEROES AMONG US

CW2 Hans Gukeisen – United States Army
PFC Sheldon Hawk Eagle – United States Army
CW2 Scott Saboe – United States Army
CPT Christopher Soelzer – United States Army
SGT Dennis Morgan – South Dakota Army National Guard
SSG Cory Brooks – South Dakota Army National Guard
LCPL Jeremy Bohlman – United States Marine Corps
LCPL Joseph Welke United States Marine Corps
PFC Gunnar Becker – United States Army
SSG Jason Montefering – United States Army
CW2 Paul Pillen – South Dakota Army National Guard
SPC Daniel Bartels – United States Army
SFC Richard Schild – South Dakota Army National Guard
SSG Daniel Cuka – South Dakota Army National Guard
CPL Brett Lundstrom - United States Marine Corps
SGT Jeremiah Boehmer – United States Army
SPC Patrick Herried – United States Army
SGT Allen Kokesh Jr. – South Dakota Army National Guard
SSG Gregory Wagner – South Dakota Army National Guard
SSG Robb Rolfig – United States Army
SSG Zachary Tomczak – United States Army
1LT Thomas Martin – United States Army
CPL Tanner O’Leary – United States Army
SRA Jonathan Vega Yelner – United States Air Force
SPC Estell Turner – United States Army
SSG Jeremy Vrooman – United States Army
SSG LeRoy Webster – United States Army
SSG Brian Berky – United States Air Force
SGT Eduviges Guadalupe Wolf – United States Army
SSG Shane Barnard – United States Army
SGT Israel Paul O’Bryan – United States Army
CPT Dale Goetz – United States Army
SRA Michael Hinkle – United States Air Force
SSG Lex Lewis – United States Army
SPC Dennis Jensen – South Dakota Army National Guard

SD EMPLOYERS EXPERIENCE MILITARY FLIGHT

Employers of South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers received an up-close look at the responsibilities and training their employees take on while serving in the National Guard by participating in an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Bosslift in Rapid City, Sept. 18.

"The purpose of a Bosslift is to take employers from the workplace to the training site where they can see the type and quality of training their employee receives while their out for military service," said Maj. Lona Christensen, South Dakota ESGR program director.

The Bosslift hosted 23 employers of National Guard members serving in aviation units as pilots, crew chiefs or mechanics.

While most National Guard Soldiers train one weekend a month and two weeks a year, soldiers assigned to an aviation company are required additional training to meet annual flight-time requirements.

"I think it's important that employers are out here so that we can show them what their soldiers do on the weekend and why we require so much time out of our aviation soldiers," said Maj. Michael Flanery, commander of Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment. "It is important for employers to understand how essential our training is to be proficient. We have demanding jobs, other than flying positions, such as maintenance and welding that require perfection in order to fly the aircraft."

Peter Anderson, owner of MAC Construction in Rapid City, was nominated to attend the Bosslift by his employee Sgt. Matthew Walters, a 189th crew chief.

"I nominated Peter because he supports me every time I need more time off," said Walters, who has worked as a full-time carpenter for MAC since 2001. "When I came back from my yearlong deployment in 2012 he hired me back right away," said Walters.

Juggling drill weekends and additional flight time can be a struggle when working to meet project deadlines as a full-time carpenter, said Walters.

"We make it work," said Anderson. "As long as he gives us a heads up, it is kind of our philosophy to just make it work. Bosslifts give employers like Anderson the chance to get a better understanding of what their employee is specifically assigned to do."

"I'm very impressed with his duties," said Anderson. "There is a lot more to it than I thought. I didn't know he was a crew chief that went on every flight."

Employers were given an orientation flight around the Black Hills on either a UH-60 Black Hawk or UH-72 Lakota following a question and answer session with aviation leadership. They also signed the ESGR Statement of Support, pledging to fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.



"I believe the military has accelerated Matt's key characteristics such as leadership, responsibility and overall maturity," said Anderson. "We were selfishly disappointed when he deployed, but we understood and supported it. We will continue to support Matt in his military endeavors, and we are grateful for his service to both us and his country."

FARM DAY AT THE STATE VETERANS HOME

Last week residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home had the opportunity to enjoy a day on the farm. The day afforded them the opportunity to pet the animals, have a wagon ride and view a collection of old tractors.

Of course, no day at the farm would be complete without music and food. The Custer VFW and Auxiliary served up a picnic dinner of fried chicken and fixings.

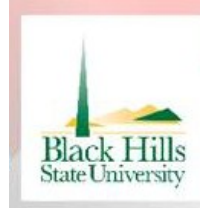


GRAND RE-OPENING OF THE BHSU VETERANS CENTER

SDDVA Field Officer William Huffmon attended the grand re-opening of the Black Hills State University Veterans Center in Rapid City this week.

The center recently underwent a little remodeling and BHSU is proud to have the doors open and are committed to assisting their veterans in achieving academic success.

Congrats to BHSU and a special thanks for all they do for South Dakota's veterans.



VETERANS PRESENCE IN NEW SANFORD CENTER

Ticketholders attending events at the new Denny Sanford Premier Center in Sioux Falls will see firsthand the American Legion's message "Veterans Serving Veterans."

This past weekend SDDVA staff attended the POW/MIA unveiling at the new Denny Sanford Premier Center.



The display showcased below is located under the grand staircase facing the front windows.

It is estimated that over 1,000,000 people will see this sign and display every year.



SDDVA STAFF PARTICIPATE IN VA TOWN HALL MEETING

SDDVA Program Manager Heather Henderson recently attended the Sioux Falls VA Town Hall meeting. During the meeting, participants were afforded the opportunity to present challenges and issues veterans are facing in receiving their healthcare service. Much of the discussion focused on C&P exams, travel pay, and transportation options.

Town Hall meetings afford SDDVA staff the opportunity to share issues that Claims Office staff, field staff and CTVSOs know their veterans are experiencing.

HONORING AMERICA'S DISABLED VETERANS

(BY GENE MURPHY)

Every year, more than 25 million people from around the world visit the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The Mall is lined with important memorials, each honoring some of America's greatest heroes. And yet none of these monuments recognizes the millions of disabled American veterans who have selflessly fought for freedom throughout our nation's history.

This will soon change. On Oct. 5, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, the first national memorial honoring disabled veterans, will be dedicated. It opens to the public the following day. Within sight of the U.S. Capitol, this new national landmark will serve as a constant reminder of the cost of human conflict. My own connection to the new American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial (AVDLM) is deeply personal — I am a disabled American veteran. As a young Army sergeant in Vietnam in 1960, in an instant, I was paralyzed by two gunshots to my right side, 30 days before I was to return home to the U.S.

Upon my return to South Dakota, I became actively involved in advocating for my fellow disabled service men and women here and across the country. I'm proud to be a part of the small but dedicated group of men and women who have worked tirelessly the past 16 years to turn the memorial into a reality — a gathering place for veterans, their caregivers, families and loved ones. The AVDLM honors veterans with both physical injuries and disabilities and "invisible" ones, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. It pays tribute to disabled heroes from all conflicts and each branch of the military, the first of the Washington monuments to honor such a broad and diverse group of Americans. Physically, the memorial is designed to convey a combination of strength and vulnerability, loss and renewal. The story of America's disabled veterans is complex and multilayered, not easily told by a single statue or plaque. Not only does the memorial cover more than two centuries of heroism and struggle, but it also includes the untold stories of the caregivers, family and friends of our country's wounded warriors. A star-shaped fountain and reflecting pool, surrounded by glass walls with embedded words and images depicting personal journeys of courage and sacrifice, serves as its focal point, mirroring the flickering light of a ceremonial flame. Combining solemn reflection and a celebration of bravery and sacrifice, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial dedication will honor those

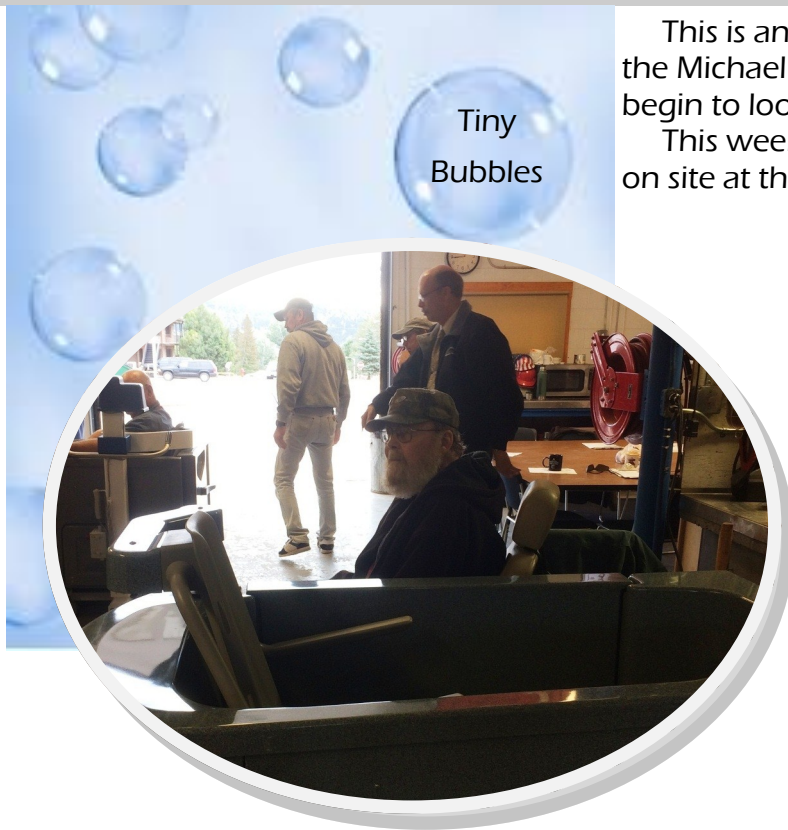
Combining solemn reflection and a celebration of bravery and sacrifice, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial dedication will honor those men and women whose service and struggle, on and off the field of battle, remind us of the true price of the freedoms we enjoy every day.

men and women whose service and struggle, on and off the field of battle, remind us of the true price of the freedoms we enjoy every day.

Come October, for the first time, America will have a place to pay tribute to some of our most courageous heroes — our disabled veterans. I encourage my neighbors here in Sioux Falls, veterans from around the country and all those who wish to honor them to come to the dedication ceremony Oct. 5. For information, visit www.avdmlm.org.



MJFSVH RESIDENTS GO WHIRLPOOL SHOPPING



This is an exciting time for the residents and staff at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home as they begin to look at new amenities for the new home.

This week Penner Spas from Aurora, Nebraska, were on site at the Home to demonstrate some of the therapeutic whirlpool tub models they have available.

Staff and residents were looking for new options for the bath suites in the new veterans home.

Ron Johnson was one of the residents who saw first-hand the options available and shared his recommended choice!!!

GOVERNOR SIGNS PROCLAMATION SUPPORTING SD GUARD, RESERVE EMPLOYERS

Gov. Dennis Daugaard demonstrated his support of employers who employ National Guard and Reserve members by signing a proclamation announcing Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week in South Dakota Sept. 21-27. The proclamation coincides with President Barack Obama's national proclamation announcing ESGR Week.

The proclamation is to recognize that employers provide critical support to members of the National Guard and Reserve; allowing citizen warriors to serve whenever the nation calls, often foregoing financial gain and making sacrifices in the process.

ESGR is a Department of Defense agency that works to develop and promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees.

National Guard and Reserve forces comprise nearly half of the nation's military strength, and stand ready to answer the call to serve, whether serving alongside active duty counterparts all across the globe or responding to humanitarian crises at home and abroad.

SDDVA STAFF AND CVSO MAKE PRESENTATION AT ALASD CONFERENCE

Last week SDDVA Program Manager Heather Henderson, Field Officer Steve Lund, and Yankton County Veterans Service Officer Michael McDonald made a presentation at the Assisted Living Association of South Dakota Convention.

During their session they briefed participants on veterans benefits—compensation, pension, death pension, DIC, and special monthly pension.



SDDVA PARTICIPATES IN SIOUX FALLS STAND DOWN

Last week SDDVA Program Manager Heather Henderson, Field Officer Steve Lund, and Minnehaha County Veterans Service Officer Patricia Kroupa participated in the Sioux Falls Stand Down.

Henderson, Lund and Kroupa were on hand to visit with veterans about the various benefits and services available to them.

Attendees also had the opportunity to get hair cuts, pedicures, and visit with various organizations and entities such as the veterans service organizations, Department of Labor, ESGR, and the VA. Attendees were also provided the opportunity to pick out some winter apparel.

SDDVA STAFF ATTEND VETERANS COUNCIL MEETING

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman and Program Manager Heather Henderson recently attended the South Dakota Veteran's Council meeting in Sioux Falls.

Secretary Zimmerman updated the council on the construction of the new state veterans home, the proposed department budget, legislative session and the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home Endowment Fund.

The Veterans Council will be hosting Legislative Round Tables to review legislative issues with legislators on:

Nov. 20—American Legion in Watertown—10:00 am

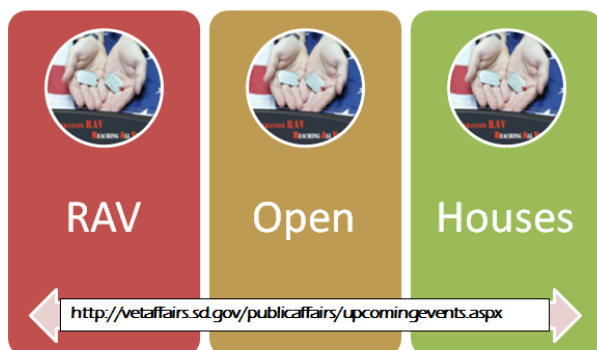
Nov. 21—DAV Headquarters in Sioux Falls—noon

Nov. 22—VFW in Rapid City—10:00 am

Upcoming Events

2014

Oct. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am
 Oct. 7—SDSU Veterans Combat Support Group—SDSU Student Union 065—6:00 pm
 Oct. 8—South Dakota Veterans Commission—MJF State Veterans Home—Hot Springs
 Oct. 17— Women Veterans Conference—Holiday Inn City Centre in Sioux Falls
 Nov. 4—SDSU Veterans Combat Support Group—SDSU Student Union 065—6:00 pm
 Nov. 12—Rapid City Stand Down—Rushmore Civic Center—Rapid City
 Nov. 20—Veterans Council Legislative Roundtable—Watertown American Legion—10:00 am
 Nov. 21—Veterans Council Legislative Roundtable—Sioux Falls DAV Headquarters—Noon
 Nov. 22—Veterans Council Legislative Roundtable—Rapid City VFW—10:00 am
 Dec. 2—SDSU Veterans Combat Support Group—SDSU Student Union 065—6:00 pm
 Dec. 9—SDDVA Mini Conference—Rapid City
 Dec.. 10—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre
 Dec. 11—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings



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